

REMARKS

Statement of Interview

Applicant's representative wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended during a telephone conversation held on November 30, 2007. Applicant's representative had contacted the Examiner requesting a status update on the present application, and inquired regarding which Sakata reference the Examiner intended to cite. The Examiner indicated that if Applicant filed a Response reiterating that the Sakata reference does not constitute prior art, that the Examiner would perform an additional search. Applicant's representative submits that the present Response is in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion.

Status of the claims

In the Office Action, claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Sakata (U.S. Patent No. 6,900,989). The Form PTO-892 attached to the Office Action indicated that Sakata et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,255,919) was the reference cited in the Office Action.

Response to claim rejection

Applicant respectfully submits that Sakata does not constitute prior art against the present claims. As set forth in the Amendment of February 5, 2007, Applicant notes that the present Application claims priority to JP 2002-18690 (JP '690), filed on June 26, 2002, which pre-dates Sakata's § 102(e) date of March 12, 2003. Applicant submitted with the Amendment of February 5, 2007 a certified English translation of JP'690, and Applicant specifically notes that

support for the present claims is found in, e.g., claims 1-9 of JP '690. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Sakata does not constitute prior art. Applicant further respectfully submits that Sakata et al. does not constitute prior art for the same reason.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the present § 102 rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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